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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/925,418	08/10/2001	Kazuhiro Shimizu	212706US2S	5716

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EXAMINER

WEISS, HOWARD

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2814

DATE MAILED: 10/29/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/925,418

Applicant(s)

SHIMIZU ET AL.

Examiner

Howard Weiss

Art Unit

2814

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 August 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-18 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☒ The proposed drawing correction filed on 19 August 2002 is: a) ☒ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 2814

Attorney's Docket Number: 212706US2S

Filing Date: 8/10/01

Continuing Data: none

Claimed Foreign Priority Date: 8/11/00 (JPX)

Applicant(s): Shimizu et al. (Arai)

Examiner: Howard Weiss

Drawings

1. The proposed drawing correction and corrected or substitute drawings were received on 8/19/02. These drawings are approved and accepted.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1 to 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohshima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,019,527) and Havemann (U.S. Patent No. 5,482,894).

Ohshima et al. show most aspects of the instant invention (e.g. Figures 8) including:

- a semiconductor body **1** of a first conductivity type and first **16** and second **14** semiconductor regions of a second conductivity type
- a gate stack with a gate insulating film **3**, a charge storage layer **4**, a control gate **6** and a cap insulating film **7** said stack having first and second side surfaces and a top surface
- an interlayer insulating film **21**, contact material **24** and a first insulating film **12** covering the second side surface and top surface but not the first side surface

Ohshima et al. does not disclose a second insulating film formed on said first side surface said contact material having a side surface in contact with the second insulating film and covering the entirety of the first insulating film, showing the second insulating film being nitride-based and explicitly showing the first insulating film being made of material different from the cap insulating film and the second insulating film being the same material of the cap.

Havemann teaches (Column 6 Lines 5 to 34) that the nitride-based insulating material is an equivalent structure known in the art. Therefore, because these two insulating films were art-recognized equivalents at the time the invention was made, one of ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to substitute nitride-based for oxide-based material. Additionally, Havemann teaches (e.g. Figures 2C and 2D) to form a second insulating film **42** on said first side surface and with contact material **40** having a side surface in contact with the second insulating film and covering the entirety of the first insulating film **30** to provide minimal protection during O₂ plasma etch (Column 5 Lines 16 to 31). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to form a second insulating film on said first side surface and with contact material having a side surface in contact with the second insulating film and covering the entirety of the first insulating film to provide minimal protection during O₂ plasma etch.

Since the Applicant has not established the criticality of the thicknesses stated and since these thicknesses are in common use in similar devices in the art, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use these values in the device of Ohshima et al. Where patentability is said to be based upon particular chosen dimensions or upon another variable recited in a claim, the applicant must show that the chosen dimensions are critical. *In re Woodruff*, 919 F.2d 1575, 1578, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 8/19/02 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicants state that neither Ohshima et al. nor Havemann show the second insulating film covering the entirety of the first insulating film. However, Havemann does show such an arrangement (see rejection Paragraph 5 above). In view of these reasons and those set forth in the present office action, the rejections of the stated claims stand.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Tomita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,376,924) show an insulation not covering an entire gate stack.
6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and

any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Papers related to this application may be submitted directly to Art Unit 2814 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to Art Unit 2814 via the Art Unit 2814 Fax Center located in Crystal Plaza 4, room 3C23. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notice published in the Official Gazette, 1096 OG 30 (15 November 1989). The Art Unit 2814 Fax Center number is **(703) 308-7722** or **-7724**. The Art Unit 2814 Fax Center is to be used only for papers related to Art Unit 2814 applications. The official TC2800 Before-Final, **(703) 872-9318**, and After-Final, **(703) 872-9319**, Fax numbers will provide the fax sender with an auto-reply fax verifying receipt of their fax by the USPTO.
8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Howard Weiss at **(703) 308-4840** and between the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Eastern Standard Time) Monday through Friday or by e-mail via **Howard.Weiss@uspto.gov**. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group 2800 Receptionist at **(703) 308-0956**


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9. The following list is the Examiner's field of search for the present Office Action:

Field of Search	Date
U.S. Class / Subclass(es): 257/324, 390, 751, 760; 438/586	5/14/02
Other Documentation: PLUS Analysis Report	5/10/02
Electronic Database(s): EAST	5/14/02

HW/hw
24 October 2002

Howard Weiss
Examiner
Art Unit 2814


LONG PHAM
PRIMARY EXAMINER